



## News Release

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### **UDOH Announces Winning Community Garden Projects**

#### ***Grants Make Way for 10 Gardens in Salt Lake and Weber Counties***

(SALT LAKE CITY) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) hopes to beautify communities and fight the growing trends of obesity and unhealthy lifestyles, one garden at a time. Ten mini-grants were recently awarded for the creation or enhancement of community gardens in Salt Lake and Weber Counties. Utah received \$100,000 to support community gardens projects through a “Healthy States” grant from the National Governor’s Association. Funding support will go directly to the ten garden projects. Partner organization Wasatch Community Gardens will provide technical assistance.

The idea behind community gardens is to create change by offering fresh produce, teaching self-sufficiency, beautifying neighborhoods, offering opportunities for physical activity and unifying a community. “Everybody wins with community gardens,” said Gina Zivkovic, award recipient for the Urban Growth Garden Project in Salt Lake City.

Zivkovic lives in the Fair Park area at 300 North and 900 West. “Fair Park is an established neighborhood with much history and character,” said Zivkovic. She lives next to a corner lot with a double-sided billboard owned by Reagan Outdoor Advertising. With a background in gardening design, Zivkovic approached Reagan about the property, which had become a dumping ground, and they soon made her a steward of the lot.

“There are 18 different languages spoken at the elementary school by my house,” said Zivkovic. “I want this garden to be as diverse as the people who live here.”

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Another recipient is the Pioneer Garden Project at 2046 Adams Avenue in Ogden. The garden was started last year in a neighborhood peppered with apartments and low-income housing. The grant money will be used to improve the design of the garden and watering system “to help the garden endure a long time,” said project coordinator Crystine Riches.

“We have many opportunities to include the community,” says Riches, “from gardening classes in the Spring to bottling classes in the Fall.” The garden will have both family plots and a community plot, which anyone can participate in. Garden volunteers will also host barbeques throughout the season and events such as a weeding contest to encourage community involvement.

South Valley Gardens Project also submitted a winning proposal, which will improve and expand existing gardens at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Murray and Midvale. The Clubs help at-risk youth through walk-in programs for grades K-12.

“Community gardens help give the kids a sense of ownership in the club,” says Billy Swartzfager, Midvale Unit Director. “They learn responsibility and how to give back to the community.” The produce the Boys and Girls Clubs’ gardens harvest will be given to the families and nearby neighbors.

Other award winners include Riley Pride Garden (Riley Elementary) at 1410 South 800 West in Salt Lake, Forest EcoGarden at 1575 West 1000 North in Salt Lake, Full Circle Garden (City Academy) at 555 East 200 South in Salt Lake, Heritage Commons Community Garden (U of U) at 2140 E. Red Butte Road in Fort Douglas, Historic Sandy Community Garden at 300 East 9000 South in Sandy, Seven Canyons School at 2150 S. Foothill Drive in Salt Lake, and Watchwood Community Garden at 2200 West 4130 South in Taylorsville.

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“There are 10 award-winning projects, but the number of “winners” is much higher than that,” said Lynda Blades, physical activity and state grant coordinator, Utah Department of Health. “This is an opportunity for people to make a difference for themselves, their families and future generations.”

For more information on the funded community garden projects visit:

[www.health.utah.gov/obesity](http://www.health.utah.gov/obesity).

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public’s health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.*